



## Electronic Newsletter



## Dog Days of Summer

August 2006

### in this issue

[August Scoping](#)

[Piping Plover Update](#)

### Message from the Superintendent



As we begin our general management plan (GMP) we are looking to lay a foundation for the park to change and adapt to current times. This could range from policy and legal changes to facility reviews and staffing plans. Anything we plan must be in context with the unique environs of a barrier island and its many stakeholders.

Our open houses now being held throughout the island

### Greetings!

The Dog Days or the dog days of summer are typically the hottest and most humid times of the year. They are a phenomenon of the northern hemisphere where they usually fall between July and early September but the actual days vary greatly from region to region, depending on latitude and climate. Dog days can also define a time period or event that is very hot or stagnant.

They get their name because the period this occurs is often during the time the star Sirius, known as the Dog Star (and the brightest star of all as seen from Earth), both rises after, and sets before, the Sun and is hence lost in the latter's glare. This period of invisibility, for Northern Hemisphere observers, is caused by the fact that the position of Sirius in the celestial sphere is well to the south of the ecliptic. The ancient Egyptians observed that the annual flooding of the Nile Delta would typically occur shortly after the star returned to view immediately before sunrise, taken to be around mid-August in the current calendar.

(source: [Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia](#))

**August** is going to be an important month for us at FINS, as we continue with our General Management Plan scoping sessions. The sessions in July at Ocean Beach and Davis Park were wonderfully successful. People stopped by to view our efforts, and provide us with their contact information. Emails have become the simplest way for us to keep you connected to our efforts. Thanks to those who have the technology. For those who don't, we'll be sending hard copy mailings, as appropriate.

Between mailings, be they email or snail mail, be sure to visit our [FINS webpage](#) to find information about all of the park visitor facilities and schedules for this 2006

region this summer and fall are like giant nets trying to capture as many ideas and issues up front. In this way, we can pull a plan together that is comprehensive as well as inclusive.

Thanks for all your input, to date, as we began our public outreach efforts for the General Management Planning process. This first step, called "scoping", is to identify the key issues and topics that the plan will address. We will continue this process throughout the rest of 2006, including the Long Island mainland and New York City in the fall. Those locations and dates are still being scheduled. As soon as we formalize them, we'll send out a press release, as well as an e-newsletter update. Then, as we move into the new year, we will be organizing our issues, evaluating our mission, and developing our foundation document.



season.

## • August Scoping

### Mark your calendars.... AGAIN!

As we stated above, August will be an important month for us. August 11-13th will be a marathon open house scoping adventure, as we move from two



locations each day to continue our efforts to reach as many park visitors as possible. This is the opportunity for park visitors to tell us what their chief concerns are with the park and to let us know what works well, what meets their needs, and what improvements and changes they would like to see.

We received some excellent feedback on important issues from our first go-round in Ocean Beach and Davis Park on July 29th. We also answered lots and lots of park-related questions from the public. It was truly a mutually beneficial experience.

Following is our August Open House line-up:

#### Friday, August 11, 2006

12:00 noon - 3:00 p.m. at Sailors Haven near the Visitors Center

4:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at Watch Hill near the Visitor Center

#### Saturday, August 12, 2006

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at Cherry Grove firehouse

3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. at Fire Island Pines marina

#### Sunday, August 13, 2006

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at Saltaire Community Center

3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. south side of Burma Road across from the Lighthouse



## • Piping Plover Update



Each summer season since 1993, Fire Island National Seashore (FIIS) has implemented extensive monitoring efforts to document the behavior and productivity of the federally-threatened piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) shorebird species. This

widespread effort involves collaboration between park divisions, as well as area state and federal agencies and the public. Recent trends in chick productivity provide evidence that park efforts are achieving positive results.

Initial efforts in 1993 observed only seven (7) breeding pairs along FIIS with an overall productivity of zero (0). During subsequent seasons, the numbers of breeding pairs continued to fluctuate, though no plover chicks successfully fledged.

In 1995, FIIS monitors recorded the first instance of successfully fledged chicks, although there were only two (2) fledglings. FIIS witnessed its most successful productivity season to date, in 2005. Resource management plover stewards observed 17 breeding pairs and 40 successfully fledged chicks, giving FIIS an average productivity rate of 2.4 chicks fledged per nest site out of a possible 4 (plovers lay clutches of 4 eggs).

Though the total number of breeding pairs during this 2006 season has increased, we anticipate the overall productivity to decrease, because of predation pressures and coastal storm effects earlier in the season. These fluctuations are to be expected, and are normally seen in any wildlife populations.

When the final fledgling count has been tabulated, we'll post the numbers on our website.

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